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A BOOK FOR TODAY

A Soviet Spy Lifts His Mask a

By JOSEPH G. O'KEEFE

MY SILENT WAR. By Kim Philby. Grove Press. 262 pages. \$5.95.

In one of the final incidents of his career in espionage in Washington, Kim Philby drove to Great Falls, slipped into the woods and buried a camera, tripod and related accessories.

All this, the British diplomat accomplished in haste and secrecy, since the threat of exposure appeared to be edging upon him. But in ensuing events, neither American nor British intelligence investigators could complete the chain of evidence that would assure his conviction. In the interval, Philby fled to asylum in Soviet Russia.

Now Philby has begun his memoirs in "My Silent War" to add to the pool of books and newspaper articles written

about him and his two accomplices in spying for the Soviet Union, Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean. To expect Philby's work to be the final definitive volume in the revelations of the diplomat-spies is to be overly-optimistic. Instead, "My Silent War" is rather narrow in scope.

Introductory Sketch

The author announces in a preface that the book is an introductory sketch of his experiences in intelligence work, and that more will follow. He apologizes for any embarrassment he may cause former colleagues in both the U.S. and Britain and adds:

"I have tried therefore to confine the naming of names to former officers whom I knew to be dead or retired." But apart from the incident of the buried camera, Philby

offers almost no details of his operations for the Russians. Presumably he wants to keep the channels open for current and future espionage.

There is much information, however, on American and British spying and counter-spionage against the Germans in World War II. The author maintains that British agents committed more sabotage against the Germans in this country in the early stages of the war than the entire German-born colony in the states.

Harold Adrian Russell Philby came to Washington in 1949 as top British Secret Service officer working in liaison with the CIA and the FBI. For years he had funneled secret information to Russian agents, and with Burgess and Maclean, continued to do so. All three were well-born Britons in sensitive positions with full access to strategic data. When exposure threatened, Philby was the mysterious "third man" who warned the others. Burgess and Maclean dodged behind the Iron Curtain.

Attacks U.S. Officials

But it is difficult to accept at face value a so-called factual account by an author who built a 30-year career on treason and deceit. Philby warily reveals what he wants revealed and not a syllable more. A reader could well assume the author is simply paying off old grudges by the degree of vindictiveness with which he attacks American officials.

Dwight D. Eisenhower is described as "The most pedestrian of United States presidents." Philby says of Allen Dulles: "I had no fear of the bumbling Dulles; years later I was to be puzzled over President Kennedy's mistake in taking him seriously over the Bay of Pigs."

Of J. Edgar Hoover: "His methods and authoritarianism are the wrong weapons for the subtle world of intelligence. But they have other uses. They enable Hoover to collect and file away information about the personal lives of millions of his fellow countrymen."

But to the Rosenbergs who were executed for passing atomic secrets to Russia and to Judith Coplon who was similarly accused but never convicted, Philby applies the word "brave."

One American to win a grudging word of admiration from the British spy is Gen. Walter Bedell Smith. "He had a cold and fishy eye and precision tool brain. Bedell Smith, I had an uneasy feeling, would be apt to think that two and two make four rather than five."

But Philby fails to find fault with the gullibility of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan who told the Parliament that no evidence existed that Philby had betrayed his country. Presumably, this whitewashed the espionage agent.

Nevertheless, the author manages to inject a fictional note of suspense to his story as he relates how he pitted his wit and audacity against British intelligence agents who tried earnestly to bring down this slippery operator.